

LENTEN SMALL GROUPS

DISCUSSION GUIDE: WEEK 1

DUNWOODY UMC

Week of February 22nd

GETTING STARTED

(~20 minutes)

As we begin, make sure that everyone has a copy of this Discussion Guide and a nametag, or has identified themselves if meeting on Zoom. Remind folks that this meeting will last 60 minutes and start and end on time. Note that these guides are designed around discussing this week's sermon.

Congratulations you made it! Our goal for this week is to help us get to know one another and experience the weekly format we'll follow.

Introductions

Give each person a chance to share, begin by offering your name and responding to the following:

- As we think about the beginning of this group and the season of Lent, share something else that you've begun recently. What are you learning/discovering?
- What motivated you to take part in a Lenten Small Group?

Ground rules

Every group needs rules to live by. For this group, we commit to creating an environment that God can work in to speak to our lives. To do that (and build trust) we commit to the following rules:

- Show up and be as fully present as possible. (You know, put your phone away)
- Share your perspective in ways that respects other people's perspectives.
(Begin with "I" statements)
- No fixing, advising, or correcting. (Instead, respond with honest questions)
- Observe confidentiality (don't share thing said in the group outside of the group)

Take a moment to discuss these. What needs clarification? Are there any that you would add?

Opening Prayer *(You may use your own, or a sample prayer is provided below)*

O God, as we begin this 40-day journey, may this beginning lead us to new friendships, deeper faith, and to walking more closely with you. We are making room in our lives for your Holy Spirit to fill. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

(~5 minutes)

Read aloud this week's Scripture from **Psalm 32**, have one person read the Leader parts:

Leader: Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Happy are those to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

Group: **While I kept silent, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," and you forgave the guilt of my sin.**

Leader: Therefore, let all who are faithful offer prayer to you; at a time of distress, the rush of mighty waters shall not reach them.

Group: **You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with glad cries of deliverance.**

Leader: I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you. Do not be like a horse or a mule, without understanding, whose temper must be curbed with bit and bridle, else it will not stay near you. Many are the torments of the wicked, But steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the Lord. Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(~25 minutes, you don't need to cover all questions)

1. *The Psalms are songs that speak to the highs and lows of human life.*
What's a song you love (doesn't need to be religious) that does this for you?
2. What's a line of this Psalm that jumps out to you? How does it connect to your own life?
3. How did the concept of sin (missing the mark) show up in your upbringing or shape you?
4. Where do you feel tempted to pretend things are fine, and what would honesty look like instead?
5. How have you seen confession (to God or someone else) lead to relief, healing, or joy?
6. When have you seen someone be like a horse or mule – that its temper needs to have a bit or bridle? When have you regretted being hardheaded like a mule?
7. *The sermon closes with: "God is not waiting for our perfection, but for our honesty."*
What would it look like for you to bring God deeper honesty this week?

CLOSING

(~10 minutes)

- Next week, we'll be choosing a **Service Project** as a group. We'll send your Host a link with suggestions on Monday (2/23) that take place at DUMC's Great Day of Service on Saturday, March 14, or of Partner Ministries we work with if you'd like to schedule your own project in March or April. You can also make up your own project as a group.
 - o Once your Host sends this list on to you, look it over and come prepared to discuss and decide on how you'll serve together.
- Close by sharing **Prayer Requests** and ask someone in the group to write them down. *Share these back to the host so they can be sent out to the group.*